

To: wesT-slope@googlegroups.com;wq-news@googlegroups.com[]; q-news@googlegroups.com[]
From: wq-news@googlegroups.com
Sent: Thur 8/2/2012 11:36:38 PM
Subject: [WQ News] Fracking fallacies are being shot down
[The Daily Sentinel](#)
lorettalohman@gmail.com
loretta.lohman@colostate.edu
www.npscolorado.com
[clip_image002.gif](#)

Fracking fallacies are being shot down

By The Daily Sentinel
August 3, 2012

Opponents of oil and gas drilling continue to push the notion that hydraulic fracturing associated with drilling is polluting drinking water and posing other health threats, as participants at an anti-fracking rally in Washington, D.C. did last weekend. But the scientific evidence to support those claims is becoming ever thinner.

We doubt the attacks will halt because of that, but we hope most people will realize that, when properly conducted, fracking does not pose a significant risk to health.

The latest setback for the anti-fracking crowd came last week regarding a small Pennsylvania town that had been one of the iconic locations for those opposed to fracking.

Dimock, Pa., was featured in the anti-fracking film, "Gasland." A number of residents of the community claimed their water wells had been contaminated by fracking in the nearby Marcellus shale formation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began investigating late last year and conducted extensive samples of water wells this year.

Last week, the agency released a report saying all of the hazardous materials found in the well water were "naturally occurring substances." The EPA has no plans to conduct further tests, it said.

So the claims made about fracking damage to Dimock's water in "Gasland" proved to be false. They aren't the only fracking-related health scares to be debunked recently.

According to the Associated Press, claims that incidents of breast cancer spiked near the Barret shale formation in Texas after gas drilling and fracking began there about a decade ago aren't true. State health officials and researchers with the University of Texas found no increase in breast cancer rates in the affected counties.

Also, the EPA dropped a lawsuit earlier this year against an energy company accused of contaminating water in one rural Texas community through hydraulic fracturing.

Additionally, the EPA has famously backed away from claims of water contamination from fracking in Wyoming's Pavillion Basin and is now resampling water wells there in cooperation with state officials, Indian tribes and energy companies.

All this is not to say drilling and fracking are completely benign. Problems can occur from truck spills or improperly constructed holding ponds. And poorly sealed well tops are potential sources of water contamination. Additionally, a new federal report suggests a potential health threat to well workers who aren't adequately protected from airborne particles of the sand used in fracking.

But all those are technique issues. They aren't indictments of the process of fracking itself. Despite the attacks of drilling opponents, more and more evidence supports the statements of people like Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper that properly conducted fracking is safe.

--

Loretta Lohman, Ph.D.
Nonpoint Source Outreach Coordinator
Colorado State University
Colorado Water Institute
3375 W. Aqueduct Avenue
Littleton, CO 80123lorettalohman@gmail.comloretta.lohman@colostate.edu303-549-3063www.npscolorado.com